

The University of Tennessee Faculty Senate  
MINUTES  
February 25, 2008

Those absent were: Gary Bates, Roberto Benson, Stephen Blackwell\*, Toby Boulet, Max Cheng, Steven Dandaneau, Ruth Darling\*, C. A. DeBelius, Rod Ellis, Patricia Freeland, Randall Gentry, Lee Han, Margo Holland, Robert Holub, Roxanne Hovland, Scott Kinzy, Bill Klingeman III, Sam MacMaster, Murray Marks, John McRae, Wesley Morgan, Lynne Parker, Gina Pighetti\*, Col. Owen Ragland, Bob Rider, Lloyd Rinehart, Bill Robinson, Gary Rogers\*, W. Tim Rogers, Molly Royse, Jon Shefner, Anne Smith, Montgomery Smith, Karen Sowers, Johanna Stiebert, Patricia Tithof, Klaus Van den Berg, Andrew Wentzel, Michael Wirth, Ken Wise, John Wodarski, Tim Young

\*Alternate Senators: Natalia Pervukhin for Stephen Blackwell, Judy Grizzle for Gina Pighetti and Gary Rogers, Lois Presser for Jon Shefner, Tammy Kahrig for Ruth Darling

D. Patterson called the meeting to order at 3:32 p.m.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS AND INTRODUCTIONS**

#### Establishment of Quorum (S. Kurth)

S. Kurth confirmed that a quorum was present.

#### Senate President's Report (D. Patterson)

D. Patterson reported that he had been invited by a department head in Veterinary Medicine to meet with faculty in the Institute of Agriculture. There was a spirited but collegial exchange. Faculty members presented a strong alternative perspective that the Faculty Senate, particularly President Patterson did not represent their views of President Petersen. Some aspects of the public debate regarding President Petersen's actions were having deleterious effects on the perceptions of donors and those using their services. Further, they noted that they had not had a wonderful, warm relationship with former Chancellor Crabtree, so they did not share that perspective either.

Patterson pointed out that among the materials provided for the Senate meeting was a report on research parks that he asked Graduate Assistant S. Simmons to generate. He charged him with examining the premise that such public/private parks serve as an economic engine. The report indicates benefits for either universities or their surrounding communities are unclear.

A positive development was that the logjam constraining construction of the JIAM Building apparently has been broken. One concern had been that while the project was delayed the funds for it had been melting as a result of rising construction costs and inflation. Initiation of construction of the new Engineering building represents another move forward. A letter soliciting contributions to the Shared Governance Fund was approved and would be sent to faculty. The fund is intended to provide some flexibility and needs replenishing, as money from it was used for the reception for Crabtree.

Patterson turned the floor over to T. Rogers, Vice President for Student Affairs, who asked to speak on a matter of importance. Rogers addressed the protocol for dealing with distressed students (materials available at the meeting). The administration has been aware for some time that serious cases may develop and for years has had a Student Concerns Committee meeting weekly to discuss problems. A smaller subcommittee is prepared to evaluate/assess students reported as having problems. He encouraged faculty to contact the Dean of Students Office if a student is perceived as a problem. If an imminent threat is perceived, the campus police should be contacted. He said that faculty should not wait for a series of events to occur. And, he cautioned faculty members about engaging in public discussion of cases. He indicated he would be glad to receive suggestions about how to better inform the faculty of the program. His office can present information at larger meetings, but he does not have

the staff to meet with all units. He provided his phone number (974-7449), so that anyone with questions could contact him.

T. Wang asked about privacy protection, e.g., if a faculty member was to report someone and it turned out that there was not a problem. Rogers stated that if a faculty member were acting within the terms of her/his employment, the University would represent the faculty member in case of any action. Legal counsel has been involved with threat assessment. C. Luther asked if the information was available online. Patterson said he would distribute it on the Faculty Information Listserv.

Patterson pointed out that in the material distributed for the meeting there was a listing of when budget hearings would be held. Those meeting are open to faculty who wish to attend.

#### Election Report (J. Nolt)

J. Nolt reported that elections were underway. He had heard from the various caucus chairs. He asked the various caucus chairs to please get back to him about nominations and elections. He noted that the social sciences caucus needed someone to chair it.

#### Provost's Report (R. Holub)

The Provost was out of town.

### **MINUTES**

#### Faculty Senate

Minutes of the Faculty Senate meeting of January 28, 2008, were approved.

#### Faculty Senate Executive Committee

The minutes of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee meeting of February 11, 2008, were available as an information item.

### **MINUTES POSTED ELECTRONICALLY**

#### Graduate Council (M. Murray)

M. Murray highlighted recent decisions by the Graduate Council, e.g., the decision to not make a recommendation of having both plus and minus grades. The Academic Committee approved changes linked to changes approved by the Undergraduate Council. Draft bylaws were presented and were scheduled to be discussed at the next Council meeting. D. Birdwell asked whether counting the same courses for two Business degrees (Bachelor's and Master's) would lead to other cases of double counting being approved. Murray replied it could be done for approved programs. Murray responded there would be "no problem" to a question about entering such grades.

The minutes of the January 31, 2008, meeting were approved.

#### Undergraduate Council (J. Romeiser)

J. Romeiser pointed out that the minutes reported on numerous curricular changes. One proposed change in academic policy involved moving the W date from the 41<sup>st</sup> to 63<sup>rd</sup> day of the semester and ceasing to count WF in a student's GPA. Other changes he noted related to a student being put on academic probation and use of the term *suspension* versus the term *dismissal*.

N. Cook indicated she distributed a request via the AAUP Vox Prof listserv about the extension of the W date and wanted to share the comments she received. One question raised was about the rationale that students lack performance feedback. If reducing attrition is the concern, could the extended withdrawal date be limited to students pursuing their first 30 hours? Another concern expressed on the listserv was that academic standards not be lowered to increase retention of Hope Scholarships. Another comment

concern focused on the costs of late drops (e.g., students denied admission to a fully subscribed course, group work derailed by loss of team members). One comment suggested that whether other institutions had late W dates was not a compelling argument. Romeiser responded that the discussion of the extended withdrawal date was overwhelmingly positive and the potential impact on retention of it on Hope Scholarship retention never came up.

T. Diacon said he was surprised that the change was found in the minutes. He responded to Cook that he saw only three responses to her message on Vox Prof. The proposed change in the withdrawal date came from the Provost's Retention Task Force. In comparison with institutions with higher retention rates (e.g., Georgia, Florida, UNC Chapel Hill), UTK has a more punitive drop calendar. Our academic policies have been compared with those of various AAU schools (e.g., Wisconsin, Michigan, Georgia and Florida). Penn State University counts a WF in a student's GPA, but it also has a WN grade that is not calculated. Diacon urged the adoption of the changes, as the members of the Undergraduate Council voted unanimously for it. He asserted that the issue was not one of rigor. He said he had received e-mails from faculty members reporting that as parents of past or present students they were unhappy that the decision to withdraw needed to be made before mid-term. Wang said she would serve as a devil's advocate and point out that with the institutional comparisons Diacon was not comparing oranges and oranges. She asked whether the other institutions had similar admission standards. Diacon said he had looked at the average standardized test scores and saw some institutions had higher and some lower average test scores. Wang asked whether he knew the number of science and other courses taken in high school by entering students, as having completed them is highly predictive of success. Diacon stated it looked like our repeat policy was more stringent. Cook asked why the 63<sup>rd</sup> day was selected. Diacon said the goal was to move to a date substantially after the middle of the term, so professors would not be pressured to grade fast. The WP and WF deadline would remain the same. The shift to WP and WF allowed the campus to jettison a cumbersome late drop process.

Birdwell pointed out that with the proposed change there effectively was no difference in a WP and a WF grade. P. Crilly expressed concern about whether standards would be lowered by having a "no penalty" WF grade. Diacon replied 1) the Academic Policy Committee members thought a WF was proper punishment as employers would see it and 2) he thought other schools perceived themselves to be rigorous. W. Morgan asked about the number of cases, e.g., whether more people drop courses when there is a later deadline. Diacon replied that he could not figure that out from available data.

Cook requested that the Senate vote separately on the two controversial parts of the Undergraduate Council minutes and that the vote be recorded in the minutes. It was formally moved and seconded that the two items be voted on separately. Motion passed. The extension of the W deadline to the 63<sup>rd</sup> day was approved by voice vote.

Before a vote was taken on the WF change, J. Malia asked whether there would be a form. T. Kahrig for R. Darling responded that few faculty members assign WF grades and that perhaps more of them would be comfortable doing so, if it were less punitive. She then asked what would be the advantage of a student continuing in a course and receiving a grade of F, rather than seeking a WF. The response was that it would give the student the option to focus on other courses and possibly do better in them. One conclusion was that if a failing student went to a faculty member, he/she could get a WF and suffer no consequences. Birdwell said he felt stuck between a rock and a hard place, in that, he had experienced discomfort saying a student had failed if the final project was not turned in. He indicated he might prefer having neither a WP nor a WF. M. Breinig said she did not know what WP and WF meant and had not encountered them when reviewing students' graduate school applications. Diacon said Penn State and Kansas State were the only schools other than UTK with those grades. Malia asked why should there be a WF, for the student could simply not receive credit. Romeiser argued that the additional grades allow faculty members to make judgments. The removal of the WF grade from the calculation of a student's GPA passed (for 36, against 7, abstentions 7).

The minutes of January 29, 2008, meeting was approved. Malia asked when the changes would be effective and was told they would be effective in the next catalog.

## **PREVIOUS BUSINESS**

### Meeting with President Peterson (D. Patterson)

Patterson reported that he, Nolt, C. White, N. Howell, L. Gross, and J. Lounsbury met the previous Friday with the President for an hour to an hour and a half. Prior to the meeting he had talked with the President's staff and developed a list of questions.

On a positive note, the President was preparing to announce appointment of an interim CIO with the goal of having that person straighten out IT before conducting an external search for a permanent person. The system is trying to hire a Vice President for Human Resources, a new position currently held by an interim person. The faculty talked with the President about shared governance and its importance. Some conflict and other difficulties might have been avoided with more discussion with the faculty regarding actions planned by the UT System administration. The President expressed the view that shared governance should operate through the Chancellors in opposition to Patterson's position based on his interpretation of the *Faculty Handbook*.

Several changes are planned. The system Vice President for Academic Affairs will attend Executive Committee meetings. The President will meet with the Senate twice a year. A small group is planning development of Cherokee Farm. The President had previously promised there would be faculty representation in the planning process. From Petersen's perspective there are two avenues for input, namely the Chancellor and campus strategic planning. (Patterson noted the later avenue appears somewhat paradoxical, as Cherokee Farm is not conceptualized by the UT System as part of the campus.)

The survey was discussed, but the only acknowledgement of any problems related to communication. Some discussion of financial matters occurred that focused on the convoluted campus/system relationship. Patterson indicated that from his perspective some positive outcomes had resulted from faculty actions. Petersen indicated he would be willing to meet with faculty leaders on an ad hoc basis, but there would be no regularized involvement on his part.

Gross added that Petersen clearly stated that with regard to Cherokee Farm there would be input from various campuses (Oak Ridge, Memphis, Agriculture, and Knoxville). White clarified that the President said he would consider input from all in strategic planning, but he would decide. Stephens commended Patterson for his coverage of the meeting and said he was encouraged by the President's mention of dialogue. Few specific commitments were made other than visiting the Senate each semester. Nolt said one issue that had bothered him was how development of Cherokee Farm would affect the Knoxville campus. He wondered who would pay for it, as Petersen did not answer a direct question. Lounsbury said the President did not agree with the survey results, as in his view it was biased. The President turned down an offer to redo the survey. Howell reported that they did not get clear answers, although she did not expect clarity. She encouraged the faculty to keep plugging away.

P. Crilly said he questioned why Engineering was not represented on the Chancellor's Search Committee and now saw no faculty on the Cherokee Farm committee. Patterson said the President would say the Chancellor represents the faculty. Crilly expressed concern that the ORNL people there were not faculty involved in research. K. Stephenson had a follow-up question about F & A if generated by Knoxville faculty. Patterson said it would come to the campus and Gross agreed. Malia asked Patterson what his assessment of the meeting was and what had happened to the confidence issue. Patterson replied that actions by the Senate had led to some changes. His personal view was that it was not the time for a "no confidence" vote. He proposed watching for change by the System administration. A vote could generate considerable ill will with multiple constituencies. Birdwell raised a question about F & A. He explained that his understanding was that the University has spent money on a super computer initiative

that will benefit Oak Ridge. D. Barlow said the F & A would come to the Knoxville campus, as B. Fenwick went through the campus research office. Birdwell said it went through the campus office, but not the normal review process. Apparently Fenwick tried and failed at the system level. Birdwell then addressed the IT situation arguing that the institution has effectively been operating with an interim CIO. In his view there is a disconnect, as the President said at the open meeting that e-mail problems had been resolved, but he knew of three failures since the open meeting. Gross reported the President said the interim CIO (with a fixed duration contract) would be expected to deal with a wide variety of issues system-wide and also to work with the larger community. Birdwell asked whether the President's interest in having ORNL staff appointed to the campus faculty was brought up. It was not.

## **REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES**

### Faculty Affairs (J. Heminway)

J. Heminway indicated that at the Executive Committee meeting it was agreed that the proposed changes in the *Faculty Handbook* be handled like bylaws changes. She drew attention to several documents: a draft resolution (to be completed before the next meetings), a backgrounder piece written by Patterson and edited by Heminway, a marked-up document, and a report from S. Simmons about practices at other institutions. She expressed her thanks to committee members for their consideration of the Ombuds situation since October. The backgrounder identified the disagreement between the three Ombudspersons and the Provost over compensation. They agreed to continue with pending cases. Recently an interim appointment was made, but the campus is technically out of compliance with the *Faculty Handbook*. The goal is to have an informal channel to address problems.

Various schools have taken a variety of approaches. The proposal represents a compromise. Heminway identified proposed changes:

- the number would be reduced from three to one
- the limitation of faculty status would be removed
- the reporting line would be to the Chancellor
- the method of selection would be changed (due to serving staff and faculty).

She noted that several things needed to be addressed further:

- compensation
- how to prepare the person on relevant policies
- timing of search.

She asked that any issues be brought to her attention.

Wang asked why the person would not be a faculty member. Heminway said that decision reflects the Provost's belief that faculty members should not be compensated on an hourly or extra service basis, but rather like they are being compensated for conducting first year seminars. Wang said she thought a lot of perspective would be lost. Heminway encouraged addition of a statement about faculty experience or knowledge as valuable. B. Lyons encouraged Senators to communicate any concerns over the listserv before the next Faculty Senate meeting.

Patterson expressed his appreciation to the Faculty Affairs Committee.

## **NEW BUSINESS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### Chancellor's Search (H. McSween)

H. McSween reported that the search committee had been formed and it had a tight schedule, as the goal was to interview candidates before the end of the current semester. There was fear that the best candidates would be lost, if the interviews were delayed until the fall semester. Ads were sent to the numerous outlets (e.g., *The Chronicle of Higher Education*) and the bid deadline for search firms was the

previous week. Nominations could be made by anyone by simply contacting a member of the search committee. Nominations were scheduled to close March 20. At that point an evaluation would be made as to whether the short time line had worked. The search website would be updated regularly. Birdwell pointed out the College of Engineering, a major constituency, had been disenfranchised. In his view that disenfranchisement was tragic. He proposed that President Peterson needed to remedy it. N. Magden asked about the position. McSween replied that the qualifications were posted on the web site. Gross asked him what charge had the President given the Chancellor's Search Committee, i.e., what was the Committee to do. McSween said the Committee was to identify primary candidates for interviews and it was up to the Committee to recommend after the interviews. Birdwell noted that the Human Resources website had been changing how positions were listed and he did not think he saw the Chancellor's position listed at all. McSween said he would check on that.

#### Research Council Forum (J. Hall)

J. Hall said there are few opportunities for dialogue. The Research Council is sponsoring a four part series of panels (town hall fashion). Information was available on the Research Council website and also via a link of the Faculty Senate website. The first panel would be March 5. The second and third ones were scheduled for April. The second panel would focus on issues such as Cherokee Farm. The fourth panel was scheduled for fall. Wang asked if the intention was to suggest the need for dialogue to the administration. Would there be "some teeth"? Hall said the proceedings would be recorded like meeting minutes. The Vice President for Research said the discussion would be considered in strategic planning.

#### Crabtree Resolution (D. Patterson)

A resolution recognizing former Chancellor Crabtree received unanimous consent.

### ***The University of Tennessee Faculty Senate***

***WHEREAS***, Chancellor Loren Crabtree remains a highly-respected leader and colleague at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville; and

***WHEREAS***, he served this campus as Chancellor with tremendous integrity and fortitude for nearly five years; and

***WHEREAS***, he prior served just as commendably as Provost of this campus for two academic years; and

***WHEREAS***, under his leadership and tutelage, this campus enjoyed a record-breaking year in terms of garnered research dollars in 2007, accumulating \$132 million in total awards, the highest such number in its 213-year history; and

***WHEREAS***, in his final year of guidance, the campus admitted the most highly-qualified entering academic class in its history, with an average grade point average of 3.6 and an ACT score of 25.8; and

***WHEREAS***, his vision and determination vaulted the University's flagship campus into the ranks of the top public research institutions in these great United States; and

***WHEREAS***, he persevered in his support of the principles of shared governance to the benefit of the faculty, students, and administration alike; and

***WHEREAS***, his inspirational leadership and camaraderie will be remembered far longer than his interrupted tenure;

***THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT*** the University of Tennessee Faculty Senate expresses its sincere appreciation to

**Chancellor Loren Crabtree**

*For his exemplary leadership and service as the voice and face of the Knoxville campus of the University of Tennessee, and*

***BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT*** *a copy of this Resolution be presented to Chancellor Crabtree, and that the Resolution become part of the minutes of the Senate meeting held on February 25, 2008.*

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*Suzanne Kurth, Secretary*

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*David Patterson, President*

**ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned 5:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Suzanne B. Kurth, Secretary